



Los Padres National Forest

Figueroa Mountain Wildflower Update for April 30, 2021

Welcome back everyone!

The winner of this update's spectacular showcase is...(drum roll please)...the corridor between Ranger Peak and Cachuma Saddle. The bush lupine is lined up along much of this area in full bloom. Not only do their beautiful blue tones create a gorgeous sight, but the aroma they produce is simply breathtaking. Stunning bush poppies, sticky monkey flowers, Mexican elderberry and some scattered poppies (to mention a few) are currently adorning this area as well. If you want to see these lovelies in their peak, this is the time to do so as the bush lupine are starting to seed rapidly and won't last long.

Let's go see what the rest of the mountain has in store for us!

Starting at the first cattle guard and continuing to the canopy area, the flowers are fading rapidly, but there are some that are continuing to bloom, such as stunning Chinese houses, hummingbird sage, a few buttercups, fiesta flowers, blue dick, golden yarrow, wild onion, winecup clarkia, caterpillar phacelia, blow-wives and only a few lupine. Right before entering the canopy area, in the small field to the right, only blow-wives are present in the grassy area. In the field on the left as you enter the canopy area most of the sky lupine have gone to seed and looks quite bare, except for one pearly everlasting toward the top of the slope. Along the canopy area, not much of a variety is left. Chinese houses are still blooming strong. Other blooms in this area consist of a few blue dick, fiesta flowers, thistle, mustard, fiddleneck and an occasional hummingbird sage.

As you continue to travel up the mountain, stunning orange California poppies continue to bloom along a few parts of the road and on some rocky hillsides (see picture above). Also, look for the start of Jimson Weed on sunny slopes. Right before you get to the rusty gate, those adorable cream cups developed a second wind and have decided to rejoin the land of the blooming. Filaree can still be found at this location, along with blue dick, Mexican elderberry, winecup clarkia and mustard. Look to your left and notice that Grass Mountain remains bare.

Other wildflowers to look for as you continue your uphill drive include rapidly seeding prickly phlox and buttercups, blue-eyed grass, lots of lovely mariposa lilies swaying in the grass, beautiful wallflowers waiting for that dance, golden yarrow, blow-wives and Mexican elderberry.

At Vista Point (large gravel turnout about 11.4 miles from the bottom), everything is gone until next spring.

In the area across Vista Point and along the road to the station, only poppies, golden yarrow, caterpillar phacelia and purple sage remain.

As you pass the station, most everything is gone, and the grasses continue to dry rapidly. In the field right before Tunnel Road, only lovely orange wallflowers remain along with some wild onion. The buttercup is turning to seed quickly.

About a half mile further, in the famous poppy hillside the scattering of poppies is still present. As one continues down the road towards the campground, there are a few more slopes with the sprinkling of poppies. Some lupine can be seen throughout the hillsides, but not much. Past the campground, in the oak shaded areas on the left, bush lupine is blooming nicely. Along the stretch before getting to the Davy Brown Trailhead, the bush lupine continues to show off, along with some poppies on the rocky hillside to your left. Also look for purple phacelia, fiddleneck, caterpillar phacelias and Mexican elderberry. At the Davy Brown Trailhead, all is gone except for a few blue dicks. Beyond the trailhead, to the dirt turnout, only Mexican elderberry and bush lupine can be seen.

As one continues down the road beyond the turnout, there are fewer blooms so see, however, one can still find bush lupine, quickly seeding sky lupine, blue dick and poppies. In the open, grassy field on the left one can find blue-eyed grass, poppies, death camas, blue dick, soap plant, a few buttercups and lupine if one is up for a small walk around that field.

At the bottom of Ranger Peak, there are a few fiddle neck, bush lupine and sky lupine. As you continue up to Ranger Peak, look for fiddleneck, baby blue eyes and purple phacelias in the shaded areas.

As mentioned earlier, the stretch between Ranger Peak and Cachuma Saddle is really showing off! The bush lupine is spectacular as are the bush poppies, sticky monkey flower and Mexican elderberry. Also look for chia, globe gilia, poppies, purple phacelias, golden yarrow, scarlet buglers, thistle, purple sage, collared lupine and blue dick.

Sunset Valley continues to bloom. Look for bush poppies, Mexican elderberry, goldfields, canyon wild peas, thistle, chia, small tuft poppies, collared lupine, Nuttles larkspurs, Chinese houses, wild cucumber, purple phacelia, blue dick, morning glories, prickly phlox, sticky monkey flowers, clematis, buckwheat, purple sage, golden yarrow, winecup clarkias, elegant clarkias, farewell to spring and caterpillar phacelias.

Happy Canyon's wildflowers also continue to bloom but in fewer amounts and different varieties. Look for collared lupine, tuft poppies, thistle, vetch, golden yarrow, beautiful clematis, bush lupine, bush poppies, Mexican elderberry, purple sage, morning glories and canyon wild peas. Right before the creek crossings, the grassy field on the right still has some beautiful orange California poppies only they are hard to see as they are hiding in the grass, while vetch is keeping them

company. In the shaded areas, striking fiesta flowers, Chinese houses and vetch continue to delight us. On the rocky areas, beyond the shaded fields, the prickly phlox is fading quickly, but gorgeous red Indian paintbrush, fiesta flowers, vetch, poppies, sticky monkey flower and wild canyon peas continue to bloom.

Continuing down the hill, in the full sun areas, poppies and lupine are hiding in the tall grass. Catalina mariposa lilies continue to bloom prolifically in the grassy fields. Also, keep an eye out for thistle, mustard, butter lupine and dudleya.

The Chicken Springs area has lost its luster for the year. The few poppies that are still hanging on are going fast and getting ready for a long rest.

Beyond the shooting area, to the bottom of the hill, look for dudleya, thistle, mustard, poppies, vetch, purple sage, deer weed, Mexican elderberry, death camas, wild cucumber, farewell to spring, Chinese houses and only a handful of buttercups.

A reminder to all wildflower viewers...when stopping to take pictures or to take a hike, please do not block the road at any time nor double park. As you all know, this is a hazard and makes it impossible for emergency vehicles to get through if their assistance were required.

That's all for this update. Look for our next wildflower update in three weeks. Until then, happy viewing! If you would like to be added to the Figueroa Wildflower Update email list, please send your request to Helen Tarbet by email at helen.tarbet@usda.gov. Also, to see Figueroa wildflower pictures of this year, please visit the Los Padres National Forest website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/lpnf> and go to the gallery in the Wildflower section.



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